

WASHINGTON, DC - In a letter to the Federal Aviation Administration, Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) today expressed his concern over the proposed transfer of the Fresno Terminal Area Approach Control to Las Vegas.

"There are many areas of concern that need to be meticulously thought out prior to any decision," Costa noted.

The text of the letter follows:

June 21, 2006

Marion C. Blakey

Administrator

Federal Aviation Administration

800 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Blakey:

I am writing to express my concern regarding the FAA's proposed plan to consolidate the Fresno Terminal Area Approach Control (TRACON) facility into the facility at Las Vegas.

First, the proposed consolidation would present a number of new challenges for Fresno that would impair safety and service for the Fresno area. TRACONs are designed to be effective within 100 miles of their location, and utilize line-of-sight and ground-radar based technology. The presence of the Sierra mountain range between the two locations presents a formidable geographic obstacle with which ground-based radar would have to contend. In addition the Valley's Tule fog often results in absolute zero visibility. I would hope that any proposed plan can meet these challenges without sacrificing safety or service.

Second, Fresno Yosemite International Airport is experiencing growth at a rate faster than

the national average and also has two Military Operations Areas for Lemoore Naval Air Station. As you know, Lemoore is presently seeking to expand these Operation Areas. I am concerned that the added volume in the airspace could not be adequately handled by a Las Vegas location that would also control the airspace for itself and Bakersfield.

Finally, many of the air traffic controllers presently employed at the Fresno TRACON are well-qualified and experienced individuals. Could you tell me what affect the consolidation would have on this workforce?

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to your response to these concerns.